

More Than a Roof and Four Walls

and

**Housing 2020: Future Directions for
Affordable Housing**

Submission

to the

**Western Australian
Social Housing Taskforce**

December 2009

Contents

Organisational Details	page 3
Introduction	page 3
Overview of Shelter WA	page 3
Consultation process and attendees	page 3
Forum discussion	page 4
Overview of Submission	page 5
Table: Shelter WA Model Framework for Consideration of SHTF and Housing 2020 Recommendations	page 6
Response to Recommendations	page 9
Conclusion	page 23
Attachments:	
Forum Participant Attendance List	page 24
Forum Notes	page 25
Reform Themes and Recommendations	page 27

NAME: Bronwyn Kitching and Susan Sharples

ORGANISATION: Shelter WA

REASON FOR INTEREST: Shelter WA is Western Australia's independent consumer focused non-government peak body for affordable housing.

ADDRESS: Claisebrook Lotteries House
33 Moore St East Perth 6004

Introduction

The WA Social Housing Taskforce was convened in December 2008 to find ways to reach an aspirational target of an additional 20,000 social housing dwellings by 2020. If this goal is achieved and it is the only social housing injection, WA will have approximately 60,000 social housing dwellings, which will retain the current proportion (slightly over 4%) of all residential housing stock. The final Taskforce report, released in October 2009, made 56 recommendations, from land supply to built form, from homelessness to home ownership, from market to government interventions.

The work of the taskforce occurs in the context of systemic review, evaluation, restructure and reform at local and global levels. Federal and State governments are reorienting and change-managing national and international social priorities, government programmes, funding arrangements, administrative frameworks and public and private infrastructure development. Housing, at the centre of the global financial crisis has emerged as one of the key levers in economic recovery and simultaneously a fundamental barrier.

Shelter WA believes that Western Australia faces many challenges providing affordable housing for our growing state and, at the same time, supporting workforce accommodation demands in the regions where major mining and development projects are planned and the resulting swell in population will stretch current towns. Solutions are needed to house our ageing and disabled population; to reduce the public rental wait list from its current figure over 22,000 (and growing by 80 new applicants a week), to respond to the housing needs of vulnerable groups: people who are experiencing primary homelessness sleeping rough, those who are living a secondary homeless existence - without housing security unable to exit crisis services or suspended transient in short term inadequate accommodation.

Overview of Shelter WA

Shelter WA is an independent consumer focused peak body committed to the principle of accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing for every person. Shelter WA concentrates on people who are disadvantaged in the housing market or who are at risk of homelessness. Our role is to give an informed voice on housing policy based on sound research, collaboration and consultation with community organisations and consumers and to promote housing options for people on low incomes. We do this by: holding regular forums and consultations in response to housing policy and practice issues; sitting on government and community sector committees; and, by informing and educating through the electronic circulation of regular newsletters, reports and fact sheets which are also made available on our website.

Consultation process and attendees

On November 12, 2009, Shelter WA held a forum to enable discussion around the two reports "More Than a Roof and Four Walls" and "Housing 2020" and to consider affordable housing strategies. The forum attracted participants from the Government and community sectors, as well as private individuals (see Attachment 1). Bronwyn Kitching delivered a presentation that provided an overview of the two reports, the 56 recommendations, the

Future Directions paper, its four reform themes and their inherent challenges. Over one third of the diverse group of attendees that included strong representation by senior officers from the affordable housing sector had lived in public housing.

Forum discussion

While it was a consensus opinion among participants that convoluted approvals processes builders and developers must negotiate to deliver the actual built form is a major hurdle, obstruction and inefficiency, it was agreed that land planning, licensing and zoning related matters fell outside the scope or ability of the forum to properly consider.

It is also noted that local government powers over land use and the interface with applying State veto authority is a murky and contentious issue. The responsibility to deliver public funded social and community 'good' whilst balancing local and individual interests is a political issue and government cooperation and legislative change is needed to mandate requirement for reform in this area.

It was acknowledged that funding and resourcing would be an issue for the government and the Department of Housing to progress many of the recommendations that require research and data collection or the expansion of support services. The Department's capacity to achieve strategies, in the field, with current staffing levels is limited. A case management approach was favoured for tenants with additional needs but would need to be well resourced with adequate investment in interagency support and the process of transitioning to a 'client focused holistic shared services' model. For housing career pathways to become a reality for a larger proportion of social tenants and in order to facilitate stock turnover and reduction in the waiting list, there must be readily available options in the other tenures – NRAS, private rental, shared equity, home ownership.

It was noted that of a total 39,000 social housing dwellings, last year's turnover in public housing tenants was less than 3,500, a fall of 2,000 new tenancies compared to 10 years ago. The causes of this are many but predominantly lie with the lack of alternative affordable rental options driven by unhinged inflation in house prices, grounded in restricted supply. This market environment, coupled with the changed profile of public housing tenant households to one that is increasingly on very low and fixed incomes, more dependent and exhibiting higher and multiple support needs means a higher proportion of public tenants are there 'for life'.

Forum attendees discussed the recommendations in terms of the reform themes, considering:

- the level of Government jurisdiction involved and whether reform would require changes to policy, political will and culture at Commonwealth, State, Regional and / or Local level
- how each recommendation will support each reform theme
- which recommendations are consumer related initiatives, those that are already underway and well supported, as well as those that are harder to achieve and complex
- the prioritisation of resources across the crucial changes needed to stimulate and develop the affordable housing sector
- the tasks, strategies and processes of policy development, collaboration, partnerships, cooperation, financial and human resourcing needed to facilitate the reform process.

Information from the SWA Forum and further consultation with the WA Peaks Forum, the Housing Advisory Roundtable (HART) and individual members of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) Section 80 Committee have informed the responses to the Recommendations that follow.

Overview of Submission

Shelter WA applauds this initiative by the Minister and the work of the Taskforce, and generally supports the majority of recommendations. Shelter WA acknowledges that some recommendations require change at Commonwealth and Local Government Level and that barriers to increasing housing supply include complicated, lengthy and costly approvals through planning processes, zoning restrictions and resistance at community and local level.

Shelter also recognises a lack of robust data around regional populations, demographic profiles and projections and the underlying and overall need to improve and increase delivery of client community support that would strengthen vulnerable tenancies for households requiring assistance. Mainstream public agencies responsible for supporting clients in the community have long neglected and avoided service to those insecurely housed or homeless and must share responsibility to improve and extend their assistance in order to ensure stable tenancies can be achieved and maintained. These agencies include but are not limited to Centrelink, Disability Services Commission, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department for Corrections, the State Health Department, Hospitals, the Mental Health Division and the Drug and Alcohol Office. Non-government organisations delivering outsourced public services may also engage in client 'cherry-picking' so reasonable standards, benchmarks and expectations must be developed, measured and evaluated.

Shelter WA notes that almost 50% of the current stock of public rental housing is occupied by households either in receipt of the Aged or Disability Pension and that this cohort is unlikely to have alternative viable housing options for transition other than a move to supported residential care for a proportion of seniors in the final years of life. For the public housing authority the inherent tension between providing 'security of tenure' and 'ageing in place' conflicts with the vision to deliver households mobility through a tapering subsidised continuum of housing career options that meet identified housing needs for a finite duration.

The public housing sector is struggling to accommodate the poorest, most vulnerable and high and complex needs members of the community, and is the 'houser of last resort' for people who may otherwise require forms of institutional care. The likelihood of ongoing decrease in movement by households through, and out of, public housing tenure is apparent. And more compassionate and supportive service tenancy maintenance cultures will further slow turnover. Shelter WA acutely recognises the 'churn' or 'revolving door' that was apparent between homeless (SAAP) services and fragile public tenancies, often including tenures of varying duration in state institutions, jail and hospital for these people.

The Department may need to consider if it will initiate a segmented wait list or determine a proportionate allocation system that identifies tenant cohorts on their 'likelihood to transition out' with a limit on the proportion of allocations made to 'tenants for life'. Or alternatively, the department may need to accept that as the 'houser of last resort' its tenants will increasingly be comprised of those most complex, high needs and vulnerable and those most aged and frail.

Shelter WA supports the initiatives in Taskforce recommendations that free owner-occupiers to rent rooms and auxiliary dwellings. However, in order to achieve these potentials, there are current impediments and structures that need to be overcome or amended, not least unattractive personal capital gains tax implications and the need for rooming/boarded house regulation. Shelter WA encourages the Minister to consider further measured methods to bring underutilised private residential accommodation on-stream, and look to explore an instrument to deliver tax revenue returns from the long term under-valued benefit of access, connection and proximity to public infrastructure that vacant and underoccupied privately owned houses enjoy.

An early soft target to test a new tax initiative such as this would be to scope and cost possible tax returns from well located, high price, vacant, non-Australian owned houses.

Whilst Shelter WA will not comment directly on the Taskforce recommendations concerning land zoning, town planning and building approvals processes, we note that it is these aspects that often impede the construction and delivery of timely, cost effective and necessary affordable housing supply responses. Shelter WA urges the Minister and the State Government to exercise its higher authority to bypass, avoid or override these barriers in building an adequate supply of appropriate affordable dwellings for those in need, and curtail the power of local or other groups and individuals to block essential housing provision that negatively impacts on the whole of society.

Shelter WA asserts that is a government responsibility to deliver the social housing safety net that assists the broader community and to undertake this task courageously without engaging in unnecessary and counterproductive processes that can stall or undermine social housing.

Shelter WA Model Framework for Consideration of SHTF and Housing 2020 Recommendations:

2020 Theme	Focus of recommend ^{tn}	Jurisdiction and key players involved	Research/ data collection collation analysis	additional human / other resources required	Need for external agency involvement	SHTF Rec number
provision of public housing	direct consumer impact	State gov. Dept. Housing	internal data & demogr	yes	yes	16, 21, 23
					no	22
	future supply	Federal	no	no	no	1
	integrated & joined up gov.	State gov. multiple Depts.	no	no	no	2, 42,48
	efficiency & change mgmt	Dept Housing	no	yes	no	49
future supply	State gov. Dept Housing	internal & demogr	yes	no	no	29, 18
						3, 4, 6
growth through wider participat ⁿ	future efficient sustained well managed supply	State gov. Dept Housing & ICHO's	internal data, demogr & program model	yes	yes	12
	supply, use of gov land	State gov multiple Depts.	no	no		41
	innovation & demonstration	State gov. Dept Housing	no	yes	no	27
	achievable future supply	Dept Housing & CHO's	internal data & demogr	yes	yes	28
		Dept Housing & REIWA	internal data & demogr	yes	yes	30
future supply policy & strategies	State & Local Gov	demogr	yes	yes	35, 38, 40	

2020 Theme	Focus of recommend ^{tn}	Jurisdiction and key players involved	Research/ data collection collation analysis	additional human / other resources required	Need for external agency involvement	SHTF Rec number	
supply & range, land & housing	innovation and demonstration	State gov, tertiary institutions, professional bodies	yes	yes (HIT)	yes	43	
		State gov Dept of Housing	no	no	no	52, 55	
	regional and Aboriginal supply	State & local gov multiple Depts.	demogr	yes	yes	7, 9	
	integrated & joined up gov	Federal & State gov multiple Depts.	demogr & popl ⁿ movem ^t	yes	yes	15	
	private sector supply	State and Federal gov	yes	yes	no	32	
	integrated congruent & joined up gov	State and Local gov multiple Depts.	no	no	no	33	
	freeing land use	State gov	State and Local gov	no	no	yes	34
			yes	no	no	35	
	future supply policy & strategies	State and Local gov	demogr popl ⁿ & project ^{ns}	no	no	no	37
			model develop ^{mt}	yes	no		39
			State and Local gov Dept Planning	yes	no	no	44
			State and Local gov Land agencies	yes		no	45
				State gov Treasury	policy develop ^{mt}	no	no
			State & Local gov	no		no	47
Dept Housing	yes	yes		54			
support and transition incentive	effectiveness of direct rental subsidies for private tenants	Federal	local rent prices vacancy rates	yes	yes	5	
	worker housing	State gov multiple Ministers	regional industry develop ^{mt}			8	
	subsidy increase CRA tenants & NRAS providers	Federal	local rents vacancy rates demogr popl ⁿ & project ^{ns}	no	no	10	

2020 Theme	Focus of recommend ^{tn}	Jurisdiction and key players involved	Research/ data collection collation analysis	additional human / other resources required	Need for external agency involvement	SHTF Rec number
support and transition incentive	integrated & joined up gov	State gov Depts. Housing & Child Prot	no	yes	no	17
	SH public image	Dept Housing	yes			56
	NFP sector development	Dept Housing	no	no	yes	53
	workforce development	Dept Housing	yes	yes		11
	housing access for Aboriginal				13, 14	
	sustainable adequate supply	State gov	no	no	no	19
	efficient stock deployment	Dept Housing				yes
	subsidy indexation		24			
	tenancy support & management	Dept Housing	yes	yes	yes	25,26
	private tenant subsidy	Dept Housing				31
	home loans ownership and shared equity	State gov			no	50, 51

Response to Recommendations

See Attachment 3: "More Than a Roof and Four Walls: Housing 2020 Social Housing Taskforce (SHTF) Recommendations and Reform Themes"

1 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister to secure additional funding for the Dept of Housing for 2010/2011 financial year to develop a further 2,000 affordable housing units, with a specific focus on increasing social housing stock numbers.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Forum participants expressed their opinion that 2000 units are inadequate as the public housing system is overloaded now. Forum participants reported it is too little, too late; however, it is a start and urged that additional units need to be built rather than just 'developing' or 'making accessible' existing stock – these initiatives will be needed as well

2 The Ministers for Housing and Works, Planning, Local Government and Regional Development ensure their Departments identify the synergies and opportunities between the different reform agendas to focus on increasing the social and affordable housing stock across Western Australia.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

It was noted by the consultation group that Ministerial cooperation at state level is required to progress this recommendation. A suggestion that implementing this recommendation requires a 'one stop shop' commitment about housing related issues which encompasses the different reform agendas and departments to progress the increase of housing stock. A 'common needs register' could facilitate the 'one stop shop' concept by providing information and interface and integration at multiple intake points

3 The Department of Housing immediately implements a strategy to increase supply of one and two bedroom dwellings for social and affordable housing.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

It is acknowledged that urgent need for construction of one and two bedroom dwellings is already recognised and implementation of this is underway

4 The Department of Housing maintains a specialised construction program for larger homes that caters for the housing needs of larger households.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

It is acknowledged that urgent need for construction of five and six bedroom dwellings is already underway and that these homes are needed for Indigenous and CaLD families

5 The Minister for Housing and Works approaches the Commonwealth Government to seek a review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance that considers its effectiveness in addressing housing affordability, appropriate levels of indexation and allowances for specific regions with high housing costs.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Forum participants and other commentators have identified that the current CRA instrument is crude, blunt and largely ineffective in alleviating rental housing stress for a large number of recipients and particularly those in high cost regional centres. Shelter WA urges the state to identify specific high rent regions and estimate the amount of rent subsidy required to address affordability for low-income renters in those areas. It is acknowledged that this is a commonwealth responsibility and will require a large ongoing federal financial commitment and that Local government cooperation is required and strategies implemented to prevent an increase in demand side subsidies inflating rent prices.

6 The Department of Housing immediately develops and implements a sophisticated demand model for the provision of social housing in Western Australia, which considers longer term economic, demographic and social trends affecting low income households.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA

It is noted that this recommendation is already being progressed and demand projection research and data collection is already underway

7 The Minister for Housing and Works establishes a formal review and research process to focus on improving the supply of affordable housing in the regions, inclusive of the housing requirements of Aboriginal people.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

The severe housing disadvantage, homelessness, overcrowding, poor quality and inappropriate housing stock for Aboriginal people particularly in regional and remote WA is a longstanding concern and will require concerted effort and significant funding to overcome. Shelter WA strongly encourages the Minister to avoid delay and immediately commence construction in North West regional areas where need is well recognised, whilst this review and research process is being implemented.

8 The Minister for Housing and Works and Minister for Regional Development work to identify funds within the Royalties for Regions program to be used to facilitate the development of key worker housing in the North West of the State.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

As has been reported by industry analysts the lack of affordable accommodation for key workers in regional WA has the potential to undermine economic development, productivity and growth. Shelter WA strongly encourages the Ministers concerned to immediately add to the stock of rental housing in the North West using whatever State funds are available including incentives for private residential development. This recommendation requires Ministerial will and would benefit from the co-operation of Local Governments

9 The Departments of Housing, Planning, Local Government and Regional Development establish a mechanism that identifies the housing needs of each region in Western Australia, inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal people in a regional and remote context.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

See 7. Adopting a broader perspective than looking at each isolated local government area is encouraged. Adequately resourcing and delivering community infrastructure to regional business and service centres enables healthy and sustainable communities. This recommendation will require departmental co-operation and Local Government benevolence to effect reform, and may only be possible following consolidation of local government areas.

10 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister for Housing to obtain an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments and National Rental Affordability Scheme subsidies for specific regions with high housing costs.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

See 5. The development of a responsive instrument that identifies appropriate subsidy levels in specific high cost areas is encouraged. Requires Local Government cooperation

11 The Department of Housing pilots a time limited rental subsidy scheme in the Pilbara for apprentices and trainees to facilitate access to affordable housing for the period of their structured education.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

It is acknowledged that to implement this initiative requires additional state funds to be targeted to a subsidy for a group not currently receiving this type of assistance. Shelter WA particularly encourages the State to support the workforce development of local and aboriginal people who are more likely to remain living in the Pilbara region and contribute to strengthen the community for the longer term. The recommendation also requires additional data collection, resourcing and partnering with training providers and DEEWR.

12 The Department of Housing develops a strategic policy framework to address the housing needs of Aboriginal people living in urban and regional areas, inclusive of how they can actively participate in managing housing and establishing viable community housing organisations.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Ways must be identified and implemented to support aboriginal people and communities to achieve adequate sustainable housing and the wellbeing and independence that springs from this. A principle of partnership and support toward a shared long-term goal must underpin these efforts, in contrast to the autocratic, paternalistic and punitive models that have resulted in long standing aboriginal disempowerment and disenfranchisement.

Delivering this recommendation requires governance and support so that Aboriginal people then manage their own change within a sound regulatory framework. It would also need awareness that Aboriginal housing must incorporate community and cultural complexities providing for clusters of accommodation and shared spaces. Requires policy commitment and has long term implications – planning and funding must be ongoing and not just 'project funding'

13 The Department of Housing renews its commitment to the Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Scheme and Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Loan and expands both initiatives to assist more Aboriginal households.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

It requires additional data collection, resourcing and partnering

14 The Department of Housing reviews existing home ownership schemes to ensure they provide a complete home loan and support service to Aboriginal people.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.
It requires additional data collection, resourcing and partnering

15 The Commonwealth and State Governments allocate the necessary capital and recurrent funding for the development of four Aboriginal visitor centres in Western Australia.

This is supported by Shelter WA

Aboriginal visitors centres, together with Aboriginal Language Translation and Interpreter services will go a long way to removing a major barrier, improving knowledge and access to services for aboriginal people whose primary language is their own tongue. Recommendations for this initiative have arisen in numerous forums over many years and Shelter WA calls for State and Commonwealth governments to galvanise the cooperation of the relevant departments with an interest or responsibility to action this as soon as possible.

16 The Department of Housing reviews its policies and processes to ensure that heavily subsidised public housing does not remain the primary housing option for households in the longer-term, except for those with recognised 'life-long' complex needs.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

Whilst Shelter acknowledges that to be most effective and efficient, the highest subsidised forms of public assistance should be directed to those with highest need, without a robust complementary alternative affordable housing sector even those whose only characteristic is a low income will have limited options other than costly public rental. To implement this requires clear strategies, fair and achievable exit policies and viable housing alternatives. The implication for the Department is in higher workloads and the need for additional human resources to support transitioning to other tenures, to promote incentives for tenants to transfer or alternatively to advise of / enforce punitive measures as a last resort.

Dedicated tenant matching at the point of allocation would minimise later administration costs (due to tenant transfers) and facilitate tenant satisfaction. Tenancy transfers should continue to be available as a tenant's needs and circumstances change

17 The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Minister for Child Protection to transfer responsibility for homeless services to the Department of Housing by 30 June 2010.

This recommendation is supported with caution to be effected in the medium to long term.

Shelter WA recognises the cost savings, integration and synergies that could be achieved with the implementation of this recommendation, however it is acknowledged that the current departmental location and responsibility for the administration of homeless services has been extremely effective in ensuring a high quality, responsive and well managed homeless service sector in WA, despite perpetual under resourcing and a lack of connecting and linked services from other agencies. The Department of Housing does not hold the expertise or 'culture' to maintain the standard of the current (split) system.

Difficult interdepartmental negotiation is required and a will to focus on the larger strategic picture rather than an individual department's agenda or budget. Local government cooperation is also required, but co-location of regional offices and integration of the 'street to home' continuum would significantly value add. The Ministers could consider blending / coordinating existing services as the first stage in a transition from SAAP short term and crisis accommodation (located in the Department for Child Protection) to secure social housing tenancies (that are the responsibility of the Department of Housing) with a tapering range of all tenancy supports managed by one Departmental agency to join up services.

18 The Department of Housing develops and implements an affordable housing system by 30 June 2011, which is underpinned by a Housing Needs Register that assesses the housing needs of all applicants and directs them to appropriate housing options.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Early identification and streaming applicants to the most appropriate housing tenure will avoid later intervention and household disruption. To implement this recommendation requires the development of a sensitive instrument to assess applicant characteristics and needs, a system of data collection and data management; although we understand early consideration is already underway

For the process to work effectively as anticipated, expansion of available and viable alternative housing and tenure options in other sectors is required. It is also considered that a 'one stop shop' to comprehensively assess housing related issues for applicants that encompasses the different national and state reform agendas, and holds accurate and current information about services and supports that are available from complementary departments would add to effectiveness and efficiency. A 'common needs register' could facilitate a 'one stop shop' concept by providing uniform information and interface at multiple intake points

19 The Minister for Housing and Works to recognise government subsidies will always be needed to sustain the housing and support needs of households on long-term low fixed incomes and/or with complex needs.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

To adequately plan and provide appropriate housing and support services requires additional data collection and projection, resourcing and partnering. Shelter WA notes the consideration of a personalised funding agenda (as used by the Disability Services Commission) particularly for those tenants with long term complex needs and agrees that reliability and security, client centred control and social inclusion outcomes are strengthened by greater involvement of consumers in defining and accessing their own supports.

The elucidation of a (costed) support continuum model which encompasses the needs of those tenants with the capacity to self advocate at one end of the spectrum to those with long term complex needs and decision making disabilities at the other end would progress this recommendation. It also requires an awareness that there will be a small number of tenants who utilise a high proportion of maintenance \$ and that they may need specific supports if repeat and recurrent evictions (and the costly 'churn' this creates) are to be avoided

20 The Department of Housing develops and implements a strategy to successfully transition households with income above the Department's eligibility limits into affordable rental housing, the private rental market or home ownership.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

As mentioned at numerous points in this response, growth in available housing in other sectors is fundamental to the achievement of this initiative. It requires additional data collection to identify those tenants financially and otherwise able to transition, the human resourcing of workers to work with identified tenants to undertake this task in the field and partnering with alternative housing providers and complementary support agencies. Implementation requires a mechanism for consultation with tenants and across the board support for all categories of tenants including those with the capacity to self advocate

21 The Department of Housing develops and implements a plan that reduces under-occupancy in current public housing stock.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Shelter WA highly supports the departmental focus on optimal use of public housing stock and a reduction in under-occupancy and recognises that some long-term under-occupying tenants are emotionally and socially attached to their location, and may be engaged with necessary local community supports. Shelter WA encourages the department to sensitively work with tenants identified for transition to minimise disruption or loss of these valuable connections.

Effecting this recommendation requires data collection and management and clear, achievable strategies and guidelines for practitioners. Successful implementation hinges on additional human resources to support transitioning to other tenures or homes, to promote incentives and benefits for tenants to transfer or alternatively to advise of / enforce punitive measures as a last resort. One suggestion made was for those occupying large houses with unused rooms to be charged additional rent if the rooms remain vacant.

Dedicated tenant matching at the point of allocation would minimise later administration costs (due to tenant transfers) and facilitate tenant satisfaction and tenancy transfers should be available as a tenant's needs and circumstances change.

22 The Minister for Housing and Works approves a change to existing rent setting in public housing so that all tenants pay a minimum of 25% of their income on rent by 30 June 2010.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

Inequity and disparity in rent settings for public housing tenants must be addressed and Shelter WA supports a consistent, transparent, fair model and process. The inconsistencies in Income Support levels to different cohorts on a Centrelink benefit is an area of significant frustration and necessitates the development of overlaid interface structures to minimise imbalances. Shelter WA encourages the Minister to collect the necessary tenant data and formulate a clear, achievable strategy. While we recognise that some long term tenants (now paying 23%) would be brought into line, we respect that it will be a financial burden on often elderly tenants who may need support to review and adjust their household budget.

23 The Department of Housing reviews its social and affordable housing rent setting methodology, with a view to introducing tiered rental payments for tenants based on capacity to pay and improving access to support services.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

From our discussions with stakeholders, some households with varying income sources and changing income levels would rather be administered by a system disconnected from a rent-to-income ratio and without the inherent intrusive and bureaucratic administration and reporting systems and processes.

For multiple occupant households with registered tenants who may move in and out of employment or who have casual, seasonal and variable incomes, and for those whose number of household members varies due to short and long term house-guests, visitors and relatives, a fixed and fair but affordable rent setting model would remove administration of rental variations with the risk of over or underpayment and accumulation of debt by tenants.

Disconnecting rent from income has a limited applicability, but for some, reducing insecurity, and avoiding tenants and their co-tenants needing to complete and submit reporting of

detailed temporary tenant housing intentions and income documentation for the time-consuming and indirectly costly administration of (often minor) adjustments to rent charged is worthwhile. Vigilance is required to ensure that the primary tenant is not disadvantaged and housing never becomes unaffordable for the members of the household in public tenure.

This initiative requires data collection, data sharing and management and clear, achievable strategies, policies and procedures. It also needs public relations promotion so that tenants view the tiered system as a time and cost saving benefit and possibly an indicator of the first step in their progression along the housing continuum. The transition for public tenants when their income increases, from paying higher rent to possible shared equity to outright home-ownership, would need to be embraced as a goal, motivator and an achievement by capable tenants

24 The Department of Housing to maintain the existing Bond Loan Assistance Scheme and regularly review bond loan limits to reflect changes in the private rental market.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

The significant increases and expansion of the Bond Loan Assistance Scheme has been a major factor in avoiding homelessness, reducing the potential use of crisis accommodation and helping people avoid falling into a cycle of insecure or substandard and unregulated private sector accommodations. Shelter WA encourages the Department to undertake regular annual or more frequent reviews and indexation of the bond loan amounts to ensure that it remains effective in assisting people to access private rental options when they do not have the required lump sum in personal savings and to gain this amount would require considerable hardship and possible neglect of other financial commitments with the risk of debt and legal action.

25 The Minister for Housing and Works commits to adequately funding support services for people in the social housing system to assist in sustaining tenancies and in moving people through the affordable housing continuum.

This is a consumer related **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Sustaining tenancies, by ensuring individuals can cope with independent living through the delivery of personal and instrumental supports in the community to consumers with additional needs should not be seen as the sole responsibility of the Department of Housing. Specialised and specific service provision that is the responsibility of other departments and jurisdictions, but that are essential to sustaining a tenancy must be readily available on request and referral. The lack of complementary and preventative assistance to vulnerable households through community health agencies, financial counselling, drug and alcohol treatment programs, disability, personal and home-help services, legal support and others has been a major factor in failed tenancies, homelessness and risk of homelessness.

This recommendation relies on improved and effective referral and response policies and high but reasonable mutual expectations and quality of response. This must be underpinned by the resources to conduct additional data collection and management, inter-agency protocols and memoranda of understanding, internal and external agencies increasing community resources and clear, fair and achievable strategies to access an expanded available range of other support options and housing tenures.

26 The Department of Housing identifies the support needs of current public housing tenants to assist with the development of individual housing plans.

This is a consumer related priority supported by Shelter WA

Whilst we support this in principle it is recognised that the identification and development of individualised housing plans for those without any particular need is not the most efficient use of scarce resources in a time of high demand by applicants unable to access housing.

It is recommended that the department undertake this assessment and planning process only for those who are routinely identified under current alert processes. To implement a blanket system requires additional data collection, resourcing and management and clear, fair and achievable strategies. The reality of a genuinely available support continuum and accurate assessment processes to identify tenant support needs requires development. Forum participants reflected on the applicability in WA of a UK model which uses an independent waitlist assessor, joint management and allocations that can be independently audited and verified.

27 The Department of Housing immediately establishes a Housing Innovations Team and allocates between five and ten percent of the Department's capital expenditure budget each financial year to deliver the Housing Innovations Team Strategic Business Plan.

This is a low priority not immediately supported by Shelter WA.

Faced without guaranteed further growth funding after 2011-12 through the NAHA or NPA's and in recognition that over past decades, the department has not been able to increase the provision of social housing stock at the rate required to meet expressed need, Shelter WA is hesitant to support diversion of significant funds from a limited funding pool to this initiative.

This recommendation has merit and should be progressed but not to the detriment of current funds earmarked for operational costs and new construction. Shelter WA encourages the department to secure alternative revenue sources of sponsorship and financial commitment toward this initiative from developers and builders through their associate bodies and explore cost-neutral partnership with creative architects and planners.

Shelter WA asserts that it has been land developers and builders that have most benefited from restrictive house design and density parameters, and loose arrangements to ensure the delivery of socially and environmentally responsible dwelling types. Shelter WA also notes that land-banking behaviour engaged in by some developers who hold serviced lots vacant and undeveloped to gain from land price inflation at a later date is counterproductive and detracts from the full realisation of social and community benefits through the availability of adequate diverse housing supply.

Demonstration projects and market leading research and design effort is supported, but Shelter WA promotes this is not the sole responsibility of government and mandated or incentivised private and business capital should be made available and leveraged. A forum suggestion was for the Minister to consider other investment options including the sale of Government bonds to finance housing which requires Commonwealth / State cooperation and relevant regulation and administration.

28 The Department of Housing develops a strategy and policy framework for the Community Housing sector that clearly articulates its expectations of stock growth from each of its programs.

This is a high priority supported by Shelter WA.

As a key player and core component of the growth strategies articulated at National and State level, Community Housing Providers must be informed and supported in order to achieve the quantum of new supply needed. Clear, reasonable and achievable targets must

be identified and time-consuming, costly and unnecessary administrative and reporting barriers must be removed. Community Housing Organisations require confidence to grow and this will be best achieved through negotiation and articulation of expectations, information provision and a partnership, cooperative approach.

29 The Department of Housing continues to undertake financial, legal, tax and policy analysis to evaluate whether a Not for Profit Housing Company can use financial leverage to achieve a high level of sustainable growth in social and affordable housing provision at low unit cost.

This is a low priority not immediately supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA does not support the department developing a Not for Profit Housing Company that would be in direct competition with current and emerging Community Housing Providers and by comparison would be significantly advantaged by its larger size and scale. Shelter WA encourages the department to continue supporting CHO's to amalgamate or explore other means to achieve the economies of scale that will deliver the level of growth desired.

Rather, Shelter WA encourages the department to explore US and UK international models of public and community land 'trusts' to deliver a range of affordable housing tenures and outcomes on gifted land held in perpetuity and managed by a NFP for the community.

30 The Department of Housing continues to develop the Affordable Rental Brokerage Scheme with the aim of introducing the scheme by 31 December 2009.

This is a consumer focused **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA encourages the department to maintain and expand this scheme and consider adoption of current models for lease arrangements to provide access to and utility of existing private and other housing stock e.g. the defence forces model where dwellings are leased from individuals (and maintenance paid) to access housing for ADF staff and families.

It is noted this initiative requires funding guidelines, data collection on available or underutilised housing, population and planning projections

31 The Department of Housing analyses the potential costs and benefits of a time limited rental subsidy scheme, which could meet the different housing needs of urban and regional areas.

This is a consumer focused **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

It is long recognised that the current CRA system is limited in its effectiveness to deliver affordable rental outcomes for a large number of West Australians, and there is a gap for those on low and moderate incomes from sources other than Centrelink income support. Caution is required in the implementation of this recommendation that demand side subsidies carry the risk of rent inflation and may flow directly to landlords with no benefit to consumers, however, alleviation of housing poverty is a sound objective. It requires data collection, resourcing and management as well as clear, fair and achievable strategies

32 The Department of Housing, through a public education program, encourages homeowners to rent spare bedrooms to individuals and families seeking affordable housing.

This is a consumer focused priority supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA supports any initiatives to free underutilised housing resources in all sectors including the private realm. It must be recognised and systems developed to deal with the

unique and complex dynamics for individuals when engaged in shared housing arrangements. In order to implement a system that facilitates and supports private owners to undertake this recommendation, the Commonwealth and State personal and capital gains tax and other implications must be understood and if necessary amended and adjusted.

The simultaneous development of an independent community based assessment, referral and support / mediation service is suggested, with clear rights and responsibilities articulated for both parties and a robust complaints and grievance system. Inherent risks for both parties include the potential for exploitation on both sides (such as frail owners wanting high levels of informal and unpaid support from their boarders, threatening eviction or other harms on the one hand and boarders behaving in ways that are distressing, traumatic, dangerous or irresponsible to the owner).

It is noted there are difficult and complex personal, social, care and support and tax implications that require management prior to this recommendation becoming reality, but encourages the department and the Minister to further explore and develop such a model.

33 The Departments of Planning and Local Government recognise housing as a key outcome of their respective reforms and work together to improve the diversity and affordability of housing in Western Australia.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Despite the obvious complication and implementation time lag that is a function of the process to achieve shared decision making, Shelter WA promotes that the best, most durable and effective initiatives are realised when all players are 'on board', congruent and working towards mutually agreed outcomes. Potential synergies, financial and resource efficiencies that can be gained through coordination and joint efforts are far greater than what can be achieved by one department player alone. Addressing the systemic disconnects, conflicting policies and fragmented related and complementary service systems must be urgently confronted. For consumers, the myriad of conflicting access and regulatory criteria for the range of public systems is confusing and frustrating and a major barrier.

Shelter WA supports the thrust of the CoAG Reform Agenda and the review of state agencies and instruments. We encourage State departments to prioritise work to identify and strengthen cooperation and collaboration and avoid working at cross purposes. A related need is for the State to show leadership on the ground and insist Local Government Authorities will support reform and co-operation, and allow for the delivery of suitable built form.

34 The Minister for Planning oversees the introduction of state planning reforms that will allow for the blanket subdivision of all lots across Perth above 800m² by 31 December 2010 and 700m² by 31 December 2011.

This is cautiously supported by Shelter WA

Planning reform to facilitate infill development and allow for higher density and a broader range of housing types is supported by Shelter WA. It is noted that this recommendation requires Ministerial will and negotiation with Local Government to facilitate reform.

35 The Minister for Housing and Works leads the State Government in the adoption of a whole of government State Affordable Housing Strategy that clearly outlines its priorities and plans to ensure the provision of housing that will accommodate the population of Western Australia over the next 10 years.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA supports the development and adoption of a whole of government State Affordable Housing Strategy, but notes that our history has produced many failed strategies that were never realised. For such an initiative to become anything other than rhetoric and to actually guide and support real housing outcomes, some level of regulated, legislated or enforceable policy and procedure that is measurable and defined must also be implemented.

This recommendation requires Ministerial cooperation and to achieve any goals may also require legislation. Solutions to built form inadequacies in individual dwellings and the breadth of 'not-very-user-friendly' urban and regional centre designs and facilities also require amelioration. Introducing and promoting universal and 'social' design template models and guidelines encompassing an awareness of safety and vulnerability issues, healthy social mix and the need for density and co-location is also encouraged. The need for creative dwelling design to cater for 'concertina' and life-stage change households is also acknowledged.

36 The Western Australian Planning Commission introduces a Statement of Planning Policy related to affordable housing that clearly outlines the objectives and measures that are to be used to facilitate its provision in Western Australia.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

It is suggested that the WAPC goes further than this recommendation and mandate provision to meet current and affordable future housing need.

37 Metropolitan Local Governments develop Local Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their community and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers, types and tenures.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Local and Regional population projections to plan for, guide and measure the necessary delivery of adequate housing supply is an urgent need. Targets should be ambitious but achievable in recognition of the mismatch in type and need and general lack of well-located, smaller and affordable dwelling types for single person households. Forum participants suggested that this initiative requires a commitment to build housing for the tenant.

38 Regional Local Governments work together with appropriate regional bodies and stakeholders to develop Regional Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their communities and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers, types and tenures.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

See 36. This recommendation requires data collection and Regional Local Government Authority will and commitment to facilitate reform

39 The Western Australian Planning Commission updates the *Guidelines for the Preparation, Form and Content of Local Housing Strategies*

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

It requires data collection, demographic and planning projections along with awareness that the urgency to deliver built form should not be undermined by an extended timeframe for policy development

40 The Department of Housing and Department of Planning commit to working with the Western Australian Local Government Association and Regional Development Commissions to develop effective Local and Regional Housing Strategies that complement the new State Affordable Housing Strategy.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA encourages the department to bring to the fore principles of social justice, compassion and leadership and if necessary exercise authority to ensure strategies are adequate and achieved by LGA and RDC partners. Requires data collection and Local Government will and commitment to facilitate reform

41 The State Government, through its various land development and redevelopment agencies, continues its role in the development of residential land to ensure the ongoing provision of affordable housing in Western Australia.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

This recommendation could be extended to a mandate to ensure a portion of all residential land is allocated for affordable housing

42 The State Affordable Housing Strategy must clearly outline the role and objectives of each State Government land development agency, including the capacity to use their profits to support the ongoing supply of social and affordable housing.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

It is acknowledged that implementation requires Ministerial will to facilitate reform and potential legislative change to allow State agencies to direct profit to the supply of affordable and social housing

43 State Government Land and Housing Agencies should act as market leaders by embracing innovation and demonstrating best practice in the design, development and construction of land and housing.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA

See Whilst Shelter WA does not support the diversion of significant housing funds to implementing a HIT initiative, smaller scale innovation, display and promotion of best practice is encouraged. This recommendation could be strengthened so that the State Government and its Agencies designate a proportion of all public housing as 'innovative' and incorporate best practice as design policy and practice

44 The Department of Housing, LandCorp and the Redevelopment Authorities provide a minimum of 15% of their annual development for affordable housing and report against this benchmark annually.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Forum participants proposed that 15% was a conservative proportion when balanced against the expressed and identified need for affordable housing by a large number of our

population. It was asserted that if all forms of affordable housing tenure were taken into account with proportions identified for each type, including NRAS dwellings, shared-equity options and others, an achievable target could be up to 50% of new dwellings targeted for affordable housing. Requires Local Government cooperation and the will and commitment to facilitate reform along with possible legislative change

45 The State Government undertakes regular reviews of each agency's landholdings to identify surplus sites that can be used for residential development, with the first review completed by 31 December 2009.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

Shelter WA encourages the State Government to go further than limiting a review to surplus land sites, but to broaden its focus to include former industrial and other brownsites and publicly owned buildings that are underutilised or vacant that could be redeveloped, fitted out and bought onstream as affordable housing dwellings.

46 The Department of Treasury and Finance amends the Asset Disposal Policy to ensure that all surplus government land that is disposed of through the Property Asset Clearing House for residential development includes 15% affordable housing.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

See responses to recommendations 41 through 45

Shelter WA urges the State government to re-prioritise its efforts in this regard, and ensure that the disposal of public assets delivers the highest benefits to the most vulnerable and disadvantages citizens in the long term. Shelter WA further proposes that a 15% benchmark is inadequate and could be increased with the inclusion of a broader range of affordable housing types.

47 The Department of Planning introduces changes to the Residential Design Codes and Local Government Planning policies to allow the use of ancillary accommodation for non-family members on lots over 800m2 by 31 December 2010 and over 700m2 by 31 December 2011.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA.

See response to recommendation 32.

Any initiative to make available under-utilised housing stock in private, public or community hands is encouraged. Regulation around residential tenancy law and rights and responsibilities of both parties need clarification and the tax barriers and implications need resolving before this will be achievable.

48 The Department of Housing develops a whole of government State Affordable Housing Strategy to be presented to Cabinet by 30 June 2010.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA

See response to recommendation 35

Shelter WA encourages the Department of Housing to engage the commitment and support of other State agencies to ensure any housing strategy developed will accomplish more than unsuccessful previous strategies containing lofty and ambitious ideas, rhetoric laden prose and unachievable goals. We urge the Department not to waste precious time and scarce resources developing the next iteration of mythical never-to-be-realised change. We further

urge the Department to consider evaluation and measurement as a crucial and early part of the development of this strategy,

49 The Minister for Housing and Works adopts the Affordable Housing Policy Framework to guide the initial reform process within the Department of Housing to encourage streamlined change processes and enhance affordable housing outcomes in the short term.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA

Shelter WA recognises that reform is a complicated and difficult process, blighted with known and unknown pitfalls and requires long term vision and departmental cultural and policy change.

50 The State Government maintains adequate funding for Keystart so that it can continue to provide housing finance to people on low and moderate incomes.

This is a consumer focused **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Shelter WA is aware that the WA State Government provides a nationally envied and relatively unique loan vehicle for low and moderate income earners with aspiration to achieve home-ownership. Whilst broader environmental and market factors impede the ability of Keystart loans to cushion the impact for these consumers of house price inflation and interest rate changes, this initiative is valuable and highly regarded and could be expanded. Any changes to the scheme require financial, demographic and residential building data collection and adequate resourcing

51 The State Government continues to provide shared equity loans to households who would otherwise be unable to access home ownership.

This is a consumer focused **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

The realisation of a system that illustrates a continuum of affordable housing options requires that a shared equity form of ownership is maintained as an important step. Shared equity is further along the continuum toward complete liberation from state subsidy for those who can progress and a realistic option for those who could benefit not as an interim option but as a secure and appropriate tailored way to wellbeing. Implementation requires data collection and resourcing

52 The Department of Housing maintains its important role as one of the State Government's land development agencies and continues to retain profits from this activity to help fund social and affordable housing programs.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Could be mandated to ensure the development of adequate supply of affordable housing

53 The Department of Housing continues to support the development of the Not for Profit housing sector.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

The quantum and type of support directed to NfP housing providers could be mandated to ensure transparency, confidence and security for the ongoing operation, strategic planning and growth projections of the Not for Profit housing sector

54 The Department of Housing develops and implements a clear strategic asset management plan by 31 December 2010 to ensure best utilisation of the public housing asset base.

This is a **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

The achievement of this recommendation could be fast-tracked. If the Department has completed the audit of its asset base for the purposes of dwelling upgrades and renovation through NPA's and stimulus funds, consideration and determination of an asset management plan could be achieved earlier than December 2010. Shelter WA recognises that the department is faced with multiple urgent demands and is itself undergoing significant reform and restructure and that the achievement of this recommendation is dependent on robust internal administrative procedures

55 The Department of Housing acts as a market leader in land development and housing construction by demonstrating best practice and innovative projects to the wider market.

This is a priority supported by Shelter WA

See responses to recommendations 27 and 43.

Need to guard against committing scarce resources to unrealistic, low benefit unachievable and inapplicable development

56 The Department of Housing develops a public education campaign that highlights the positives of affordable housing, including the achievements of current and past social housing clients.

This is a consumer focused **high priority** supported by Shelter WA

Celebrating and showcasing the long term positive community and personal benefits of the deployment of taxpayer and public funds must be encouraged. A straw poll conducted amongst participants to the Shelter WA Forum that revealed over one third of participants had a history of living in public housing, illustrates the social inclusion, realisation of opportunities and participation that could be attributed to access to appropriate and affordable housing when needed.

Conclusion

The challenges outlined by the Social Housing Taskforce to develop and deliver viable, affordable and alternative housing options to enable citizens to transition through a social housing continuum, with dignity, will only be achieved with a whole of Government commitment and a recognition of the expertise and knowledge of the Community sector.

Attachments

1. SWA Information and Consultation Forum "More Than a Roof and Four Walls and Housing 2020" attendance registration list
2. SWA Forum notes Housing 2020
3. More Than a Roof and Four Walls: Housing 2020 Social Housing Taskforce (SHTF) Recommendations and Reform Themes

Attachment 1

Shelter WA Information and Consultation Forum Social Housing Taskforce Report More than a Roof and 4 Walls Housing 2020 November 12th 2009

	Name	Organisation/individual	Role	phone / email
1	Nelia Nascimento	Department of Immigration & Citizenship	IHSS Contract Manager (South)	nelia.nascimento@immi.gov.au
2	Gillian Murphy	DIAC	IHSS Contract Manager (North)	
3	Patricia Rankin	DIAC	Complex Case Co-ordinator	
4	Lauren Enright	MIDLAS	Tenant Advocate	Lauren@midlas.org.au
5	Jean Blechynden	Balga Primary School	Deputy Principal	jean.blechynden@det.wa.edu.au
6	Reg Lambert	Finucare		
7	Linda Crumlin	Red Cross	Community Care Administration Assistant	dchilds@redcross.org.au
8	Ian Hafekost	Dept Housing	SHTF Secretariat	Ian.Hafekost@housing.wa.gov.au
9	Christina Kadmos			christinak@inet.net.au
10	Tracy Pollett	Community Vision	Special Project Senior Team Leader	Tracy.Pollett@communityvision.asn.au
11	Roger Guinery	Dept Housing		Roger.GUINERY@housing.wa.gov.au
12	Jenny Cogan	Sussex Street Community Law Service	Tenant Advocate	j.cogan@sscls.asn.au
13	Karen Bird	Sussex Street		
14	Palacios, Vilma	North Metropolitan Area Health Service	A/ Manager Health Promotion	Vilma.Palacios@health.wa.gov.au
15	Sheree Beaton	Advocare		
16	Amanda Perlinski	Disability Services Commission	Complex Needs Co-ordinator	Amanda.Perlinski@dsc.wa.gov.au
17	Liz Waterhouse	Access Housing		Carol.Huish@accesshousing.org.au
18	Miles Henningham	Access Housing		
19	John Garbutt	Brightwater Oats Street	Community Integration Coordinator	john.garbutt@brightwatergroup.com
20	Wendy Foote	Brain Injury Rehabilitation Facility	Community Integration Coordinator	
21	Caruso, Chantal	Lynn MacLaren MLC	Research Officer	Chantal.Caruso@mp.wa.gov.au
22	Patricia Towers			chachagrange@bigpond.com
23	Patricia Towers			chachagrange@bigpond.com
24	Suzanne Blyth	City of Rockingham	Youth Project Officer	Suzanne.Blyth@rockingham.wa.gov.au
25	Michelle Draper	Dept Housing	Policy Officer State Affordable Housing Strategy	Michelle.draper@housing.wa.gov.au
26	Pearl Proud	ASSeTS		

Attachment 2

Shelter WA Forum Notes

Forum “More Than a Roof and Four Walls” and “Housing 2020: Future Directions for Affordable Housing” Thursday 12th November 2009

25 people attended the forum, from the government and community sectors, as well as private individuals. A PowerPoint presentation by the EO of Shelter WA provided an overview of the two reports, the 56 recommendations, reform themes and their inherent challenges. Those attending were divided into three groups and asked to discuss the recommendations in terms of particular reform themes, considering which recommendations were:

- already underway or agreed
- falling within Commonwealth or multiple state jurisdictions or were policy related or difficult
- consumer related.

It was agreed that planning related matters fell outside the scope or ability of the forum as legislative changes would be needed to provide a mandated requirement for reform in this area.

Discussion within each group ranged across the different future directions themes:

Group 1

- funding and resourcing would be an issue for the Department of Housing (Housing) – their capacity to achieve strategies, in the field, with current staffing levels, often only part time workers
- a case management approach would need to be well resourced with pathways established to facilitate interagency support and transitioning

Reform theme 1: reforming provision of public housing (PH)

Consumer related

Recommendations 16 and 21

Housing ensures heavily subsidised PH does not remain long term except for those with life-long complex needs / Housing develops plan to reduce under occupancy –group in favour but strategies and solutions difficult

- support transitioning to other tenures
- incentives to transition?
- punitive measures? eg those occupying large houses with unused rooms could be charged additional rent if the rooms remain vacant
- tenancy transfers as needs and circumstances change
- tenant matching

Recommendation 22

Housing ensures all tenants pay a minimum of 25% of income on rent – group did not view this favourably

- long term tenants (now paying 23%) would be brought into line but it would be a financial burden on often elderly tenants

Recommendation 23

Housing reviews rent setting and introduces tiered rentals based on capacity to pay – group supported this initiative with more funding

- to transition people when their income increases, from higher rent to shared equity to outright purchase, would be seen as an achievement and a motivator for the individual

Commonwealth or multiple state jurisdictions or policy related or difficult

Recommendation 1

Housing will achieve 2000 more affordable housing units by 2010/11

- too little too late - PH is overloaded now - feels inadequate but it is a start
- represents more than 10% of all new houses built
- Housing will not necessarily build but make accessible

Recommendation 29

Housing evaluates the possibility of a not-for-profit company achieving housing growth

- Consider lease arrangements currently used by the army and navy to access staff housing – lease from individuals and pay for maintenance

Reform theme 2: promoting growth through wider participation of other sectors

Consumer related

Recommendation 12

Housing develops policy to address the housing needs of Aboriginal people including participation in housing management – group in favour

- Aboriginal people should manage their own change within a regulatory framework
- Long term implications – planning and funding must be covered

Reform theme 3: increase supply and range of affordable housing

Commonwealth or multiple state jurisdictions or policy related or difficult

Recommendations 44 and 46

Housing, Landcorp and Redevelopment Authorities provide minimum 15% of their annual development for affordable housing / Planning amends asset disposal policy to ensure 15% is for affordable housing

- Why limit to this – higher % and broader base for social housing

Group 2

- Investment options
- Across the board support for all categories of tenants
- One stop shop re housing related issues
- Government bonds – sell to finance housing
- Support continuum, personalised funding agenda
- Individual capacity and ability to advocate for self
- Accuracy of external assessment processes
- Changing needs
- Common needs register – interface and multiple intake points
- Independent waitlist assessor and management and allocations – joint management – refer model used by UK Shelter

Group 3

- Build housing for the tenant
- Universal design and safety and vulnerability issues
- Density and co-location vs social mix
- Need for creative dwelling design – ‘concertina’ households
- Indigenous housing to facilitate community and respect / cultural complexes and clusters / shared spaces
- Repeat and recurrent evictions – households and individuals need specific support
- Small number of tenants use a high proportion of maintenance \$

Attachment 3

More Than a Roof and Four Walls: Housing 2020 Social Housing Taskforce (SHTF)
Recommendations and Reform Themes

“More Than a Roof and Four Walls”

“Housing 2020” Social Housing Taskforce (SHTF) Recommendations and Reform Themes

Reform Theme 1: Reforming Provision of Public Housing Consumer related

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	16. The Department of Housing reviews its policies and processes to ensure that heavily subsidised public housing does not remain the primary housing option for households in the longer term, except for those with recognised life-long complex needs. State	Requires clear and fair and achievable exit policies and strategies and human resources
	21. The Department of Housing develops and implements a plan that reduces under-occupancy in current public housing stock. State	Requires data collection and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies
	22. The Minister for Housing and Works approves a change to existing rent setting in public housing so that all tenants pay a minimum of 25% of their income on rent by the 30th of June 2010. State	Requires data collection and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies
	23. The Department reviews its social and affordable housing rent setting methodology, with a view to introducing tiered rental payments for tenants based on capacity to pay and improving access to support services. State	Requires data collection and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies

**Reform Theme 1: Reforming Provision of Public Housing
Commonwealth or multiple state or policy related or difficult**

Recommendation	Tasks to implement
<p>1 .The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister to secure additional funding for the Dept of housing for 2010/2011 financial year to develop a further 2,000 affordable housing units, with a specific focus on increasing social housing stock numbers. Commonwealth</p>	<p>Commonwealth responsibility</p>
<p>2 .The Ministers for Housing and Works, Planning, Local Government and Regional Development ensure their Departments identify the synergies and opportunities between the different reform agendas to focus on increasing the social and affordable housing stock across Western Australia. State</p>	<p>Ministerial Cooperation at state level</p>
<p>29. The Department of Housing continues to undertake financial, legal, tax and policy analysis to evaluate whether a Not For Profit Housing Company can use financial leverage to achieve a high level of sustainable growth in social and affordable housing provision at low unit cost. State</p>	<p>Longer term complex research hinges on Henry</p>
<p>42. The State Affordable Housing Strategy must clearly outline the role and objectives of each State Government land development agency, including the capacity to use their profits to support the ongoing supply of social and affordable housing. State</p>	<p>Ministerial will and legislative change</p>
<p>48. The Department of Housing develops a whole of government State Affordable Housing Strategy to be presented to cabinet by 30th June 2010. State</p>	<p>Longer term Legislative</p>
<p>49. The Minister of Housing and Works adopts the Affordable Housing Policy Framework to guide the initial reform process with the Department of Housing to encourage streamlined change processes and enhance affordable housing outcomes in the short term. State</p>	<p>Longer term departmental cultural policy change</p>

Reform Theme 1: Reforming Provision of Public Housing
Agreed or underway

Recommendation	Tasks to implement
<p>3. The Department of Housing immediately implements a strategy to increase supply of one and two bedroom dwellings for social and affordable housing. <i>State already underway</i></p>	<p>1 & 2's already underway</p>
<p>4. The Department of Housing maintains a specialised construction program for larger homes that caters for the housing needs of larger households. <i>State already underway</i></p>	<p>5 & 6's already underway</p>
<p>6. The Department of Housing immediately develops and implements a sophisticated demand model for the provision of social housing in Western Australia, which considers long term economic, demographic and social trends affecting LI households. <i>State already underway</i></p>	<p>Demand projection data and research already underway</p>
<p>18. The Department of Housing develops and implements an affordable housing system by 30 June 2011, which is underpinned by a Housing Needs Register that assesses the housing needs of all applicants and directs them to appropriate housing options. <i>State already underway</i></p>	<p>Requires data collection and management and alternative options and strategies</p>

Reform Theme 2: Promoting Growth through the wider participation of the other (community and private) sectors

Consumer related

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	12. The Department of Housing develops a strategic policy framework to address the needs of Aboriginal people living in urban and regional areas, inclusive of how they can actively participate in managing housing and establishing viable community housing organisations. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering

Agreed or Underway

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	41. The State Government, through its various land development and redevelopment agencies, continues its role in the Development of residential land to ensure the ongoing provision of affordable housing in Western Australia. State and Local	could be mandated

Reform Theme 2: Promoting Growth through the wider participation of the other (community and private) sectors

Commonwealth or multiple state or difficult

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	<p>27. The Department of Housing immediately establishes a Housing Innovations Team (HIT) and allocates between five and ten percent of the department's capital expenditure budget each financial year to deliver the HIT Strategic Business Plan. State</p>	<p>Longer term demonstration</p>
	<p>28. The Department develops a strategy and policy framework for the community housing sector that clearly articulates its expectations of stock growth from each of its programs. State</p>	<p>Requires data collection projection partnering</p>
	<p>30. The Department of Housing continue to develop the Affordable Rental Brokerage Scheme with the aim of introducing the scheme by 31 December 2009. State</p>	<p>Requires funding guidelines data collection and projection</p>
	<p>35. The Minister for Housing and Works leads the State Government in the adoption of a whole of government State Affordable Housing Strategy that clearly outlines its priorities and plans to ensure the provision of housing that will accommodate the population of Western Australia over the next 10 years. State and Local</p>	<p>Requires ministerial cooperation legislation</p>
	<p>38.Regional Local Governments work together with appropriate regional bodies and stakeholders to develop Regional Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their communities and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers, types and tenures. Local</p>	<p>Requires data collection LGA will</p>
	<p>40. The Department of Housing and Department of Planning commit to working with the Western Australian Local Government Association and Regional Development Commissions to develop effective Local and Regional Housing Strategies that complement the new State Affordable Housing Strategy. State and Local</p>	<p>Requires data collection LGA will</p>

Reform Theme 3: Increasing Supply and Range of Affordable Land and Housing Options

Agreed or already underway

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	43. State Government Land and Housing Agencies should act as market leaders by embracing innovation and demonstrating best practice in the design, development and construction of land and housing. State	Could be mandated
	52. The Department of Housing maintains its important role as one of the States Government's land development agencies and continues to retain profits from this activity to help fund social and affordable housing programs. State	Could be mandated
	55. The Department of Housing acts as market leader in land development and housing construction by demonstrating best practice and innovative projects to the wider market. State	Could be mandated

Reform Theme 3: Increasing Supply and Range of Affordable Land and Housing Options

Commonwealth or multiple state or local govt cooperation policy development difficult

Recommendation	Tasks to implement
7. The Minister for Housing and Works establishes a formal review and research process to focus on improving the supply of affordable housing in the regions, inclusive of the requirements of Aboriginal People. State	Requires data collection delays the action
9. The Departments of Housing, Planning, Local government and Regional Development establish a mechanism that identifies the housing needs of each region in Western Australia inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal people in a remote and regional context. State	Requires departmental cooperation and LGA will
15. The Commonwealth and State Government allocate the necessary capital and recurrent funding for the development of four Aboriginal visitor centres in Western Australia. Commonwealth and State	Joint responsibility commonwealth state multiple department
32. The Department of Housing, through a public education program, encourages homeowners to rent spare bedrooms to individuals and families seeking affordable housing. State with Commonwealth and Tax implications	Difficult and complex social, care and support and tax implications require management
33. The Departments of Planning and Local Government recognise housing as a key outcome of their respective reforms and work together to improve the diversity and affordability of housing in Western Australia. State and Local	Requires LGA will and cooperation
34. The Minister for planning oversees the introduction of State planning reforms that will allow blanket subdivision of all lots across Perth above 800m2 by the 31 December 2010 and 700m2 by 31 December 2011. State and Local	Requires ministerial will
36. The West Australian Planning Commission introduces a Statement of Planning Policy related to affordable housing that clearly outlines the objectives and measures that are to be used to facilitate its provision in Western Australia. State	Policy development lag
37. Metropolitan Local Governments develop Local Housing Strategies that use agreed population projections to identify the future housing need of their community and set clear targets and objectives for the achievement of housing numbers and tenures. State and Local	Requires data collection projection and policy development lag

Reform Theme 3: Increasing Supply and Range of Affordable Land and Housing Options

Commonwealth or multiple state or local govt cooperation policy development difficult (continues)

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	39. The Western Australian Planning Commission updates the Guidelines for the preparation, form and content of Local Housing Strategies. State and Local	Requires data collection projection and policy development lag
	44. The Department of Housing, LandCorp and Redevelopment Authorities provide a minimum of 15% of their annual development for affordable housing and report against this benchmark annually. State and Regional	Requires LGA cooperation and legislation and will
	45. The State Government undertakes regular reviews of each agency's landholdings to identify surplus sites that can be used for residential development, with the 1 st review completed by 31 December 2009. State	Requires ministerial will and departmental cooperation and partnership
	46. The Department of Treasury and Finance amends the Assets Disposal Policy to ensure that all surplus government land that is disposed of through the Property Asset Clearing House for residential development includes 15% affordable housing. State	Requires policy change lag
	47. The Department of Planning introduces changes to the Residential Design Codes and Local Government Policies to allow the use of ancillary accommodation for non- family members on lots over 800m ² by 31 st December 2010 and over 700m ² by 31 December 2011. State and Local	Requires clarification of support and tax implications require management
	54. The Department of Housing develops and implements a clear strategic asset management plan by 31 December 2010 to ensure best utilisation of the public housing asset base. State	Internal administrative

Reform Theme 4: Improve Support and Transition Incentives

Commonwealth or multiple state or local govt cooperation policy development difficult

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	5. The Minister for Housing and Works approaches the Commonwealth government to seek review of Commonwealth Rent Assistance that considers its effectiveness in addressing housing affordability, appropriate levels of indexation and allowances for specific regions with high housing costs. Commonwealth	Commonwealth responsibility
	8. The Minister for Housing and Works and Minister for Regional Development work to identify funds within the Royalties for Regions program to be used to facilitate the development of Key Worker housing in the North West of the State. State	Requires ministerial will and cooperation
	10. The Minister for Housing for Housing and Works negotiates with the Commonwealth Minister for Housing to obtain an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance payments and National Rental Affordability Scheme subsidies for specific regions with high housing costs. Commonwealth	Commonwealth responsibility
	17. The Minister for Housing and Works negotiates with the Minister for Child Protection to Transfer responsibility for homeless services to the Department of Housing by 30 June 2010. State	Difficult interdepartmental negotiation larger strategic picture
	56. The Department of Housing develops a public education campaign that highlights the positives of affordable housing, including the achievements of current and past social housing clients. State	PR

Reform Theme 4: Improve Support and Transition Incentives

Agreed or already underway

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	53. The Department of Housing continues to develop and support the Not for Profit sector. State	Could be mandated

Reform Theme 4: Improve Support and Transition Incentives

Consumer related

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	11. The Department of Housing pilots a time limited rental subsidy scheme in the Pilbara for apprentices and trainees to facilitate access to affordable housing for the period of their structured education. State additional subsidy to remote allowance	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering
	13. The Department of Housing renews its commitment to the Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Scheme and Private Rental Aboriginal Assistance Loan, and expands both initiatives to assist more Aboriginal households. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering
	14. The Department of Housing reviews existing homeownership schemes to ensure they provide a complete home loan and support service to Aboriginal people. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering
	19. The Minister for Housing and Works to recognise government Subsidies will always be needed to sustain the housing and support needs of households on long term fixed income and or/with complex needs. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering
	20. The Department of Housing develops and implements a strategy to successfully transition households with income above the department's eligibility limits into affordable rental housing, the private rental market or home ownership. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and partnering and clear and fair and achievable strategies
	24. The Department of Housing to maintain the existing Bond loan Assistance Scheme and regularly review bond loan limits to reflect changes in the private rental market. State	Requires data collection and resourcing
	25. The Minister for Housing commits to adequately funding support services for people in the social housing system to assist in sustaining tenancies and in moving people through the affordable housing continuum. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies
	26. The Department of Housing identifies the support needs of current public housing tenants to assist with the development of individual housing plans. State	Requires data collection, resourcing and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies

Reform Theme 4: Improve Support and Transition Incentives

Consumer related continues

	Recommendation	Tasks to implement
	31. The Department of Housing analyses the potential costs and benefits of a time limited rental subsidy scheme, which could meet the different housing needs of urban and regional areas State a subsidy on top of CRA	Requires data collection resourcing and management and clear and fair and achievable strategies
	50. The State Government maintains adequate funding for Key start so that it can continue to provide housing finance to people on low to moderate incomes. State	Requires data collection and resourcing
	51. State government continues to provide shared equity loans to households who would otherwise be unable to access home ownership. State	Requires data collection and resourcing